


# FLOODING & THE CLIMATE

Why rising water will be a feature of the future  
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 XR protests  
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# ARGUMENT OVER FREE SPEECH

How the right pose as free speech defenders to justify bigotry**>>Pages 14&15**

# Socialist Worker

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## SUPPORT UNIVERSITY WORKERS' STRIKES

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Strikers from the University of the Arts London joined a rally last week

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## DEATH IN CUSTODY

### Cops go free after black man dies

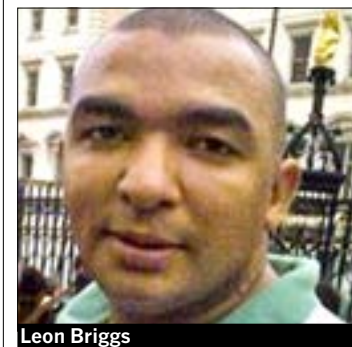
**THE FAMILY** of a black man who died in police custody is "devastated and outraged" that five police officers will not face disciplinary action.

Leon Briggs died in hospital on 4 November 2013 after he was detained and restrained by police in Luton, Bedfordshire.

Police detained Leon under section 136 of the Mental Health Act and restrained him on the street.

They took him to Luton police station and put him into a cell where he was further restrained.

After Leon became unresponsive, he was taken to hospital where he was pronounced dead. The Crown



Leon Briggs

Prosecution Service (CPS) decided in November 2018 that police officers would not be charged over Leon's death.

But five police officers had still been due to face misconduct hearings.

Three cops faced allegations of breaching the standards of professional behaviour in relation to the use of force.

All five also faced allegations of breaching standards relating to "duties and responsibilities".

The misconduct cases have now collapsed.

Margaret Briggs, Leon's mother, said, "As a family we are devastated and outraged at this decision."

"It is over six years since my son's death and to be told that the officers will not face any public scrutiny is further denial

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# AFTER WEINSTEIN GUILTY VERDICT FIGHT SEXISM EVERYWHERE

by SARAH BATES

**THE CONVICTION** of Harvey Weinstein for rape and sexual harassment ought to be a spur for a war against sexism everywhere.

After a seven-week trial and years of accusations, Weinstein faces up to 25 years in prison and

further charges of assaulting two women in Los Angeles.

His prosecution is a testament to the courage of the women who came forward with allegations.

And his convictions come after victims were forced to endure horrific treatment at the hands of Weinstein's legal team.

His lawyers subjected accusers



Guilty—Harvey Weinstein

and witnesses to questioning that suggested they were to blame for Weinstein's behaviour.

It was a reminder of how the legal system doesn't support victims through the arduous process.

Weinstein was handcuffed and due to be taken to a prison

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## THE THINGS THEY SAY

**'We got enough problems with South Korea with trade. On top of it, they give them the best movie of the year?'**

Donald Trump reacts to the film Parasite winning the Best Picture Oscar

**'Can we get like Gone with the Wind back please?'**

Donald Trump continues

**'Who are the bombers? You can't say stuff, because it's racism, but it will generally be males of a Muslim persuasion'**

Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary calls for profiling of Muslim men at airports

**'Thirty years ago it was the Irish'**

Ryanair's O'Leary adds to his target list

**'Loyalty is admirable'**

Opening words of a column by Annunziata Rees-Mogg, who has defected from the Conservative Party to the Brexit Party and then back again within the past 12 months



# Thanks from rich criminals as Trump hands them pardons

**US PRESIDENT Donald Trump pardoned a clutch of super-rich criminals last week including "junk-bond king" Michael Milken.**

Milken was sentenced in 1990 to ten years in prison after pleading guilty to charges including fraud. He ultimately served 22 months in jail at a "Club Fed" luxury prison for the rich.

Trump's pardon citation noted Milken's endowment of various medical charities and cancer research and hailed him as "one of America's greatest financiers".

Milken said in a statement that he and his wife Lori were "very grateful to the president".

Trump also commuted the sentence of former Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich.

Blagojevich's crimes included soliciting bribes



BLAGOJEVICH SETS off for jail in 2012 PICTURE: JUSTIN NEWMAN/WIKIMEDIA

from people interested in the Senate seat of Barack Obama after his election to the presidency in 2008.

Trump told reporters on Tuesday afternoon that he had commuted Blagojevich's sentence, because, "He served eight years in jail, a

long time. He seems like a very nice person, don't know him," the president added.

However, Blagojevich had appeared as a contestant in 2010 on the Celebrity Apprentice television programme, which Trump hosted.

On his release from prison last week Blagojevich, previously a Democrat, declared himself a "Trumpocrat" in the 2020 election.

Another lucky pardon recipient was billionaire property magnate Edward J DeBartolo Jr.

He was charged with paying a £300,000 bribe in \$100 bills to Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards.

This was allegedly in return for state government approval of a riverboat gambling project in which DeBartolo had invested.

Edwards went to prison, while De Bartolo served no time.

Trump has pardoned only one African American man in more than three years in office. He was the boxer Jack Johnson who had been dead for 72 years.

**THERE'S A saying that the only two certainties are death and taxes. But maybe neither is true for the wealthy. We know they succeed in avoiding tax. Now Amazon corporation chief Jeff Bezos and billionaire PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel have both invested in San Francisco-based Unity Biotechnology, a company whose mission is to "extend human healthspan".**



Bezos—how long to live?

**SO MANY homeless people have been found sheltering in bins that the Biffa company has issued a warning of deaths by crushing when they are accidentally tipped into lorries. At least seven people have been killed in the last five years.**

## Cops neglected welfare of a prisoner who died

**COPS FAILED to carry out proper welfare checks on a sick woman and did not notice for 12 hours that she had died in her cell.**

The Surrey officers were supposed to have been carrying out half-hour checks on Miranda Stevenson. But they had only looked at her through a spy hole in the cell door.

While CCTV footage indicated she had stopped breathing at about 7.30pm on 31 May 2015, staff were recording that her breathing was regular. It was not until the following morning, that Miranda was found to be dead.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct initially investigated



Miranda Stevenson

the actions of three custody sergeants and six detention officers involved in Miranda's detention.

In June 2018, it was agreed that one sergeant and six officers should face disciplinary action.

The sergeant was given management advice and three officers received final written warnings.

## Where did prince Andrew go after Pizza Express meal?

**A FORMER royal protection officer has raised questions about prince Andrew's "alibi" for the night he allegedly had sex with teenage trafficking victim Virginia Roberts.**

In an interview with The Mail on Sunday, the officer said he believes the prince may have returned to Buckingham Palace in the early hours of 11 March.

This contradicts his account of being "at home" all evening after taking his daughter to Pizza Express in Woking.

The officer recalled how the prince arrived by car at the Palace in the middle of the night and hurled abuse at guards



Prince Andrew

when they did not open the gates quickly enough.

He believes it could have been the same evening the prince was alleged to have had sex with Roberts at the home of Ghislaine Maxwell.

Maxwell's Belgravia home is a mile from Buckingham Palace.

## Tories' friends in Hungary replace Jewish author with Nazis

**THE TORIES who pumped out antisemitism slurs against Jeremy Corbyn are also big friends of the antisemitic Hungarian government.**

So they won't be mentioning that Viktor Orban's regime has removed Imre Kertesz from its required reading for schools.

Kertesz was a Jewish Auschwitz survivor, and the first Hungarian awarded the Nobel Prize for literature

He has been replaced on the list by three antisemitic authors. Two were supporters of the Hungarian Nazi Arrow Cross.

This group helped to round up 475,000 Hungarian Jews for deportation to the gas chambers.



James Heapey

## Minister calls for rubber duck bombs powered by plankton

**JAMES HEAPEY has urged military chiefs to "think the ridiculous" just days after he was appointed a junior defence minister.**

Speaking at the RUSI think tank he suggested special forces troops should shift away from "crawling through the ditch with their dagger in their teeth ready to plunge it into the heart of the enemy commander".

Instead they should move towards planting "malware in enemy servers".

Fleshing out his suggestions he said, "I was talking last week about plankton-powered rubber duck bombs, but why not?"

"If a million plankton-powered rubber duck bombs crashed into the Queen Elizabeth, she might sink."

Heapey, a former army officer, also compared Britain's military to doomed video rental firm Blockbuster before it was put out of business by Netflix.

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# Fury after racists assault black man in London pub

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

**FURY ERUPTED** outside the Duke of Wellington in west London last Saturday after racists assaulted a black man at the pub.

Around 200 people marched from the top of Portobello Road and rallied outside the pub. Chants of “Duke of Wellington—shame on you”, “Justice 4 El” and “Black Lives Matter” filled the air.

El Harding, a 20 year old worker at the pub on the Portobello Road, was attacked during his shift at around 11.15pm on Saturday 15 February.

Eunicia Harding, El’s mother, told Socialist Worker that a group of six men called him “nigger, golliwog and boy” before launching themselves at him.

“There were some guys already in the pub when El started his shift,” she said.

“They were taking peanuts from the bar and El said, ‘You’ve got to pay.’ One of the guys said, ‘What did you say nigger?’ Another one said, ‘What did you say boy’—like he was a slave master.”

“The manager was downstairs doing the count and El was left by himself.”

Eunicia said the group started throwing peanuts around the place and “takings legs off chairs”. “Before he knew it, El had six guys on him,” she described, “and one of them grabbed him by the neck”.

## Frustrated

Family, friends and residents are angry with management at the Duke of Wellington and Young’s Brewery.

Eunicia said, “We are very frustrated with the pub because they did not call the police on the night.”

“We feel let down and it’s a disgrace. They even called to ask when El would be back in work.”

She said one of the new managers



EL’S MOTHER Eunicia leads the chants outside the pub

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER



The Duke of Wellington

feared calling the police would harm the pub’s reputation and licence.

At last Saturday’s protest Eunicia led off chants of “Shame on you” and demanded that management come out to speak to her. She is demanding an apology and release of the CCTV footage.

The Justice 4 El campaign has vowed to protest outside the Duke of Wellington every Saturday.

Eunicia said that “racists are coming out of their shells”. “A lot of our parents and grandparents had to fight Teddy boys in the 1950s, but we’ve not seen anything like this for a long time,” she said.

“The community are in uproar

and that’s why we’ll be protesting outside the pub”. Racists have been given confidence by Tory prime minister Boris Johnson—who has called black people “piccaninnies” with “watermelon smiles”.

As local resident and socialist activist Moyra Samuels told the protest, “Racism continues to grow in this rotten country right from the prime minister down.”

“We have a history in this community of taking on racism going back to the 1950s. You do not know who you have messed with.”

Join the protest 8pm, Sat 29 February, Duke of Wellington, 179 Portobello Road, Notting Hill, London W11 2ED

## Fight against transphobia

THE TORIES could drop plans to give trans people the right to self-identify under the guise of “protecting children”, according to the Sunday Times newspaper.

It reports that the Tories will formally respond—after a long delay—to a consultation into reforming the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) 2004.

Trans people are made to go through a medical diagnosis, wait two years to legally change their gender and pay a £140 fee. Self-identification would allow trans people to change their legal gender after affirming

it to a registrar. The Scottish government is also pushing ahead with its own consultation of the GRA and says it’s committed to reform by 2021.

Many of those opposed to GRA reform rely on the transphobic trope that trans women are men who want to invade women’s spaces. There was a backlash after the left wing Morning Star newspaper published a disgraceful cartoon last week based on that idea, for which it was forced to apologise.

Socialist Worker supports self-identification.



PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Trans pride

## DEATH IN CUSTODY

### Cops go free after man dies

>>>continued from page 1 of justice and accountability for Leon,” she said.

Cops and the police’s pet watchdog, the IOPC, have blamed each other for the collapse of the hearings.

Bedfordshire Police Federation chairman Jim Mallen said the misconduct hearing collapsed due to “numerous failings” by the IOPC. He said they “meant the officers could not be guaranteed a fair hearing”.

Meanwhile, the IOPC said it was due to “the decision of Bedfordshire Police to offer no evidence”.

Anita Sharma, head of casework at the Inquest charity, called for a “radical overhaul of the complaint process”.

## Bereaved

“Through no fault of their own, bereaved families are being consistently failed and traumatised by this faux system of ‘accountability’,” she said.

“It is deplorable that this disciplinary hearing has been stopped before it even started. The fact that no officer will be held to account for potential wrongdoing demonstrates the inadequacy of the police complaints process and ineffectiveness of the IOPC.”

“The lack of independence is startling in a flawed system which allows a force to decide whether or not to present a case against its own officers.”

“The obstructive actions of the police and their representatives from the outset significantly contributed to the excessive delays.”

## Stand Up To Racism protests on United Nations anti-racism day

Saturday 21 March, London and Glasgow

- No to Islamophobia & antisemitism
- Justice for Windrush
- Refugees welcome



standuptoracism.org.uk

## IN THIS WEEK

# 2012

### Trayvon Martin is shot and killed

SEVENTEEN YEAR old Trayvon Martin is walking home in Florida when he is shot and killed by police officer George Zimmerman.

Zimmerman was acquitted of first degree murder in June 2013, sparking furious protests.



# Success on first days of university walkouts

Workers have been on strike at 74 universities—and many have had angry pickets, reports **Sadie Robinson**

**THERE WERE** strong picket lines and some big turnouts on the first days of a wave of 14 days of walkouts by university workers.

Workers at 74 universities are fighting over pay, equality, contracts, workload and pensions.

The first two days, Thursday and Friday of last week, were a big success—despite appalling weather in some places.

A further three days of strikes took place on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Carlo Morelli, a UCU union rep at Dundee university, said the picket line there last Thursday was “possibly the best ever”.

“The weather wasn’t good but we had a good number out picketing with some students and new people, including casualised staff,” he told Socialist Worker.

## Growing

“There’s no indication of the strike weakening. If anything, support is growing because we are seeing new people appearing. The strike is reaching deeper layers of people.”

Jo Gilmore, a department rep at York university, agreed. “It was absolutely pissing it down but it didn’t dampen people’s spirits at all,” she said.

“The pickets were bigger than

## BACK STORY

**Members of the UCU union are fighting in two disputes**

● One is to defend their USS pension scheme. Bosses of the scheme want workers to pay in more—but get far less

● The other dispute is over what strikers term the ‘four fights’

● These are pay, workload, equality and casualisation

● Their demands include a pay rise, a 35 hour week, an end to gender and race pay gaps, and an end to zero hours contracts

they were at the start of the last strike. It was very confident with lots of new people. Lots of students were supporting us.

“I think people are up for staying out this time. We’re exhausted and angry but also optimistic that we can achieve something.”

Around 120 people picketed at Leeds university. UCU rep Lesley McGorrigan said there were “new faces and veterans”.

More than 80 people joined a rally at the University of Birmingham, and big crowds rallied in Manchester.

And 100 picketed at Glasgow university. That’s despite two UCU



WORKERS CRY fowl play over pay

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

branch officials previously arguing for the strike to be called off apparently due to lack of support.

And big numbers were reported at Sheffield Hallam and Sheffield universities, despite “driving rain”.

Tony Sullivan, branch chair of London College of Fashion of University of the Arts (UAL), London, said the strike had been “fantastic”.

“I’m really proud that this strike is about fighting oppression as well as fighting exploitation,” he told a rally in London.

“This strike is about a war on casualisation. It is about fighting

the discrimination faced by women, BAME and disabled workers.”

He said 22 strikers had picketed at the London College of Fashion.

“UAL had seven picket lines,” he said. “That’s never happened before. This campaign has rebuilt our branch.”

After the London rally, strikers held a general meeting to discuss the fight.

Margarita, a UAL rep in Camberwell, south London, said the dispute had transformed the union there.

“At the start we had a meeting of three people,” she said. “Then we

had eight, then we had around 20. It can be done.”

There is a sense that after years of neoliberal attacks in education, workers have had enough.

“People feel universities are at breaking point and something needs to change,” said Jo.

“For a lot of people on the picket line, the strike is necessary to defend their conditions and the conditions of their students.”

## On other pages...

Strikers at the Foreign Office vow to fight on >> Page 7

## SHOW SOLIDARITY

**Everyone can help the strike. Here’s how**

● Visit a picket line at your local university. See where and when the strikes are at [bit.ly/UCUstrikes](http://bit.ly/UCUstrikes)

● Donate to the strike fund [ucu.org.uk/fightingfund](http://ucu.org.uk/fightingfund)

● Invite a striker to your union branch meeting



STRIKERS HAVE had support from students and other workers.

Sam, a lecturer at UAL, said the “properly brilliant” thing about the strike had been the student support.

“They’ve been producing posters and stickers in solidarity,” he told Socialist Worker. This is a fight workers can win—and support from other unions will make a big



Students join in

difference. Individual branches, including from the Unite, NUJ

and NEU unions, have donated to strike funds at their closest universities.

National unions have also made donations. “It’s fantastic we got £5,000 from the NEU,” said Tony. “But to be honest, we need £50,000—we need £100,000.”

“We need solidarity from the rest of the trade union movement,” he said.

## Fighting to stop stress and pressure

FURY AT casual contracts, gender and race pay gaps, and years of below-inflation pay deals are fuelling the action.

Sheffield UCU rep Robyn Orfitelli said the idea that there’s not enough money to resolve the dispute is a lie.

“Proportionally the amount of money they’ve been spending on staff has been doing down consistently over the past decade,” she said.

“If they actually cared about staff, they have the money to fix this dispute. They could have done it six months ago.”

## Angry

Astrid, a student and UCU striker in Leeds, said she was most angry at casual contracts.

Workers on these contracts aren’t paid for all the preparation they do—and often have to work several jobs to make ends meet.

“I’m on a casual contract myself and it’s very detrimental,” she said.

“They are normally for less than a year. And I think just over half of all academic staff at Leeds are on them. It’s just a convenient way of hiring cheap labour.”

For Kat, increased stress had pushed her to take action.

“You can feel the pressure increasing. You don’t have time to do your job properly and that’s bad for students.”

“Universities are becoming money-making machines,” she said.

## Strikers report renewed organisation and resolve

THE STRIKE is helping rank and file organisation to grow.

Carlo said that Dundee has a strike committee for the first time. “People came forward to help run the strike,” he said.

“Things that took a few days to organise before, such as teachouts, suddenly got organised within minutes.”

A steady stream of pickets came to report for duty in Leeds on Friday morning, and were sent to picket various buildings across the campus.

There were fewer than on the first strike day, but still around 100 strikers and supporters rallied later in the morning.

And new people came to picket too.

“You don’t get the sense that people want to give up,” said Lesley, UCU campaigns officer at Leeds. “There’s definitely resolve there.”

Chloe, vice president of the UCU branch, agreed. “The mood changes on each strike day, but now people are really angry,” she told Socialist Worker. “The



Pickets in Leeds

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

bosses are just playing games with us. “Their latest offer was insulting.

“But we’ve shown that if we stand firm they will move, and I am hopeful of a victory.”

**Socialist Worker**  
WHAT WE THINK

## WE NEED TO FIGHT SEXISM EVERYWHERE

>>>continued from page 1

on Rikers Island, but was diverted to a hospital after claiming he was suffering from heart palpitations.

His trial was a watershed moment for the #MeToo movement that exploded in 2017.

Civil rights activist and #MeToo founder Tarana Burke, said, “The implications reverberate far beyond Hollywood and into the daily lives of all of us”.

In the wake of over 80 allegations against Weinstein millions of women took to social media to demand an end to the silence around sexual violence.

Mass public pressure from the #MeToo movement created a climate where powerful people can be held to account.

Cyrus Vance, Manhattan District Attorney, praised the accusers for coming forward.

“This is the new landscape for survivors of sexual assault in America and this is a new day,” he said.

There’s a sense now that the time is up for sexual offenders.

It is welcome there has been a change in social attitudes—but sexism is not gradually fading away. As abhorrent as Weinstein is, he doesn’t stand alone. His

behaviour—which many have now said was an open secret within the industry—was ignored by many who knew what he was doing.

With Weinstein behind bars, what now?

Although this week’s court ruling was important, the battle against sexist oppression has to continue on the streets, in the trade unions, in the staff room—everywhere.

Every sexist has to be made to feel uncomfortable. This lies in challenging each individual instance of oppressive language or behaviour.

But it also means coming together—men and women—

“**The trial of Weinstein was a watershed of the #MeToo movement**”

to robustly take on women’s oppression.

The Women’s Marches and protests against rape in Chile are important collective responses to sexual harassment.

But there’s still a battle for ideas. It’s likely the verdict will spur the same right wing commentators who decried #MeToo two years ago to pen columns attacking the movement.

Weinstein’s conviction matters. But sexual violence flows from our sexual class society, where women are treated as sexual objects.

So the battle has to continue to rage against sexual harassment, and take in demands about equal pay, proper childcare and reproductive rights.

The demands of #MeToo are as urgent as ever—and should be fought alongside the struggle for a world of liberation for everyone.

It is possible to live in a socialist world free of oppression, where rape and sexual violence are not a feature.

Women’s oppression is structured into capitalism and class society—so the battle also needs to be waged for revolutionary transformation.

## ESTABLISHMENT ABUSE

THE ESTABLISHMENT spent decades turning “a blind eye” to allegations of child sexual abuse.

An investigation into historical allegations against MPs, peers and civil servants working in Westminster, published on Tuesday, found political institutions “significantly failed”.

There was also “striking evidence” of how “wealth and social status insulated perpetrators” from being brought to justice. As an example, former

Liberal party leader Lord Steel ignored abuse by MP Sir Cyril Smith because it was “past history”. He recommended Smith for a knighthood.

M15 pushed for a cover-up of abuse allegations against Peter Morrison, who was a minister in Margaret Thatcher’s government. Both Thatcher and Lord Tebbit knew of the allegations.

The report says “considerations of political embarrassment and the risk to security were paramount” in Morrison’s case.

Child abusing senior spy Sir Peter Hayman escaped prosecution after his solicitor lobbied the then Director of Public Prosecutions in person.

He was the beneficiary of “preferential, differential and unduly deferential treatment”.

The inquiry is problematic in its restricted terms of reference.

But it rightly concludes, “These are examples of a political culture which values its reputation far higher than the fate of the children involved.”



Striking UCU and RMT union members unite

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## ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



## Labour leadership don't inspire hope

**WHY IS the Labour Party leadership election so depressing? Clearly it has something to do with the line-up. In all probability it will come down to the choice between Keir Starmer, the shadow Brexit secretary, and Rebecca Long-Bailey, the candidate of the left.**

Starmer claims that he will maintain the shift to the left that took place under Jeremy Corbyn. This isn't very credible coming from someone who participated in the unsuccessful right-wing coup against Corbyn in 2016.

Starmer is tacking left to win over a party membership that still predominantly supports Corbyn.

The Financial Times newspaper reports that, "on the pro Tony Blair right of the party, insiders think Sir Keir will win, and they await his gradual shift away from left wing politics". In other words, they expect him to follow the path taken by Neil Kinnock, who took over in 1983 after the left wing leadership of Michael Foot and inched the party rightwards.

Unfortunately, Long-Bailey isn't exactly inspiring. She rapidly caved on the two issues where Corbyn personally stood firm. She has said that she would authorise the use of British nuclear weapons and agreed it is "antisemitic" to "describe Israel, its policies, or the circumstances around its foundation as racist". In other words, she too is moving to the right.

There are two underlying reasons why this is happening. First of all, the Labour left is still very weak. Corbyn and his shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, spent a generation as isolated and despised figures on the back benches.

The failure of New Labour—underlined by the 2015 general election defeat—gave them their chance, as people radicalised by the struggles against war and austerity rallied behind Corbyn.

This process helped to transform Labour into the largest party in Europe as hundreds of thousands joined to support him. But this support remained largely passive. Of course, Momentum emerged to organise Corbyn's base within the party, and claims a membership of 40,000.

But it made concessions to the right's attacks on Corbyn and mobilised its supporters primarily to canvass for Labour.

The left wing programmes that Labour campaigned on in 2017 and 2019 came from the top. They may have inspired party members, but this isn't the same as a strong organised left developing.

Secondly, and more fundamentally, Labour's reason for existence is to win elections. When it loses an election badly, the priority becomes to recover lost voters.

In present circumstances, where the defeat was inflicted on a left wing leader by a very right wing Tory party, the logic is move back towards the centre.

### Knighthood

This is why we're hearing so much about "electability". Partly, I think, for sexist reasons, this favours Starmer, an establishment figure with a knighthood who used to be Director of Public Prosecutions.

It's this kind of electoral logic that helps to explain why Corbyn's own Constituency Labour Party, Islington North, has endorsed Starmer. So too has Laura Parker, ex-national coordinator of Momentum. She said, "I am backing Keir Starmer because he has placed unifying the party at the heart of his mission and made an unequivocal commitment to preserving our core policies...I trust that Keir means what he has written in his ten pledges to us."

"It would be self-defeating for him to say one thing then act otherwise."

This is simply naive. In his early years as leader Kinnock campaigned in support of the left-wing policies he had inherited from Foot. In private he told a surprised Peter Mandelson that they were "crap". The two worked together to dump them, preparing the way for Blair.

But the world is very different today from the heyday of neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s.

What does moving towards the neoliberal centre mean when this centre is collapsing everywhere? Boris Johnson won by moving rightwards, and he's not backing down now.

Chasing "electability" may simply doom Labour to the electoral irrelevance into which many continental social democratic parties are already sinking.



EXTINCTION REBELLION plans to reach wider layers of people by diversifying tactics

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

# Thousands join XR to call for action on climate crisis

**OVER 5,000 people joined an Extinction Rebellion (XR) march in London on Saturday to say "Enough is Enough" to inaction on the climate and ecological emergency.**

The march, held in collaboration with Parents 4 Future, was Extinction Rebellion's first national protest this year that aims to work together with wider movements for change.

Margaret from North London was marching behind a banner saying, "Enough lying, enough denying, enough crying, enough dying".

She told Socialist Worker, "I am furious that the government will spend over £100 billion on HS2, a project that is the opposite of public transport for ordinary people. And it will cause huge ecological damage."

"That's one reason I am marching."

"But the individual decisions made at the top of society are not the only focus. We are heading for disaster, even more in poorer countries, and society heads towards oblivion with hardly a murmur."

### Represented

The march represented something of a tactic change for XR.

The group said, "A deviation from our nonviolent direct action approach, the march will act as a more

inclusive pathway for people not yet ready to participate in civil disobedience."

That approach did attract fresh forces. Martha Johnson from West London said, "I have an NHS job that I am not prepared to lose and I was always worried about the consequences of getting arrested on an XR event. Today I know that it is going to be possible to protest without being arrested."

"I really care about the environment, and I am scared about the future for all of us. We need to find ways to change what's happening."



Climate refugees welcome here  
PICTURE: TALIA WOODIN

Other marchers were not so sure. Sally Greene said, "It was a good day and felt like a response to what has happened recently in Australia and other places."

"I have always thought that what was different about XR is that it doesn't just march about. We need days like this, but we will also need days where we upset the authorities and disrupt business as usual that is so destructive."

### Million

Last week Extinction Rebellion UK launched its new strategy for 2020, to bring 1 million more people into the movement by the end of the year.

The march was designed to act as a launchpad for a new strategy, calling on allies to join XR in a show of "collaborative strength".

Monika Neilson, march organiser said, "We know we can't do this alone and that Extinction Rebellion are a small part of a much larger, powerful climate movement."

XR plans "rolling rebellion" from 23 May.

The group says, "Our massive impact in 2019 shows nonviolent civil disobedience is an essential part of how we bring about radical change."

The urgency of the climate crisis demands serious resistance. XR, the school strikes and workplace action all

## Greta Thunberg to join strike in Bristol

**STUDENTS IN Bristol were mobilising their next climate strike for Friday.**

They were set to be joined by global climate movement figurehead, Greta Thunberg.

"Whether you are at work, school, university or college, come and join us, and stand beside Greta," said Bristol Youth Strike

**4 Climate.**

"We are the change, we are the future—we are making history," said the group.

Students added they will be "mobilising as a group" to "reduce the impacts of the climate crisis."

Join the strike 11am, College Green, Bristol, Fri 28 Feb  
Join the climate emergency summits [bit.ly/BristolSummit](https://bit.ly/BristolSummit) and [bit.ly/MancSummit](https://bit.ly/MancSummit)



Greta Thunberg



# Strikers at the Foreign Office vow to fight on

The latest phase of action at the Foreign Office is ending, but the battle is not over, says Nick Clark

**STRIKING WORKERS** at the Foreign Office were set to end a month-long strike on Friday of this week as determined as when they started.

The outsourced staff—cleaners and maintenance workers—have been battling bosses at private contractor Interserve for almost a year. They are demanding that bosses recognise their PCS union after a raft of attacks on their pay, jobs and conditions.

Now—after their longest stretch of action yet—some of them say they have to escalate even further to win.

“We’re not going to go away,” Anne, a cleaner told Socialist Worker. “We’ll keep going. We’re going to carry on until we win.”

Anne was one of those who protested outside Interserve’s offices in Waterloo, south London, on Wednesday of last week.

## Annoyed

The noisy picket lines in Whitehall, central London, throughout the strike have already annoyed the top dogs at the Foreign Office.

“We’ve already had complaints about the vuvuzelas,” striker Simon said. “So we’re pissing them off.”

“Waterloo is where the boss of the Waterloo works,” he added. “He won’t like this.”

The strikers’ battle began shortly after the government renewed Interserve’s contract with the Foreign Office in late 2018.

Interserve bosses then launched a steady assault that drove their workers to do more for less pay.

For cleaners, that meant having their overtime scrapped—something that topped up their wages and gave them enough time to do the job.

Bosses also scrapped workers’ entitlement to company sick pay, and changed pay dates—leaving many of them out of pocket. Yet attempts to squeeze conditions also pushed them together.

Terry, a PCS rep, told Socialist Worker how bosses closed all but

## BACK STORY

Workers have been fighting bosses for over a year

- The battle against Interserve started in 2018 when the Foreign Office renewed its contracts

- The month long action ending on Friday is the latest in a series of shorter strikes

- Interserve has made as many as 32 workers redundant in the last ten years

- The government hopes to save money by paying private companies to drive down wages

one of the workers’ break rooms. But with workers all together, they organised to join the union and demand a strike.

Now bosses want to break that up.

“They’re talking about bringing in staggered lunch breaks, and closing our mess room and putting us into a shoebox right by their office,” said Terry. “It’s to keep an eye on us.”

“When we had one big mess room we are all together. I think that’s what upset them.

“They gave us the idea that we all muck in together, and we’ve all unionised in one room.”

The strikers were set to march in Whitehall on Wednesday of this week.

As well as taking on Interserve, they want Tory foreign secretary Dominic Raab to take responsibility and intervene. Many of the strikers wore masks of Raab’s face on the protest in Waterloo.

But with neither the government nor Interserve budging, strikers are gearing up to go again.

“Everyone’s still up for it,” Simon told Socialist Worker. “We’re all still raring to go.

“It’s going to have to be at least the same length, longer—or even indefinite.”

Some workers’ names have been changed. Send messages of support to [helenf@pcs.org](mailto:helenf@pcs.org)



FOREIGN OFFICE strikers wearing Dominic Raab masks at a demo in Waterloo

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## SIXTH FORMS

# ‘Take the market out of education,’ say the sixth form workers as battle grows

WORKERS ACROSS 34 sixth form colleges were set to strike on Thursday this week, demanding more funding and higher pay.

The action will be the fifth walkout in the current dispute. And striking NEU union members plan to rally in central London on the strike day and march on the Department for Education.

They want to pile pressure on MPs ahead of next month’s budget.

Speakers at the rally will include Kevin Courtney, the NEU general secretary, Jean Evanson from the NEU executive and Debby Pope of the Chicago Teachers Union.

Jean told Socialist Worker, “It will be great to speak alongside Debby. Teachers’ unions in Chicago have fought successfully for better learning conditions for the communities they serve alongside better working conditions for educators.

“They have faced the effects of increased marketisation of education. Students will always lose out when financial concerns are put ahead of the learning needs that they have.” Jean describes the impact of years of

funding cuts on students.

“In our sector we have seen cut after cut,” she said. “There is less money available for students with special educational needs. There’s less money for those students in financial difficulties.

“Subjects have been cut from the curriculum. Hours are being cut. Class sizes are getting bigger.

“The social injustice is immense. Students in private schools are being taught in tiny classes without financial

restrictions.” And the stress of real terms pay cuts risks driving teachers out of sixth forms—and hurts education.

“Teacher and support staff have had ten years of pay rises well below inflation, equating to a real terms cut of around 16 percent,” said Jean.

“Their workload is spiralling out of control as classes get bigger and produce more marking. Stress increases with educators trying hard to support more students.”

Workers plan a sixth strike on Tuesday 10 March, the day before the budget.

And rebalancing means further strikes could be bigger. As ballots expire, unions have to run new ballots to hold more legal strikes.

The NEU is beginning ballots across all 68 English sixth forms. Indicative ballots earlier this month showed a mood to keep fighting.

Jean said, “Staff should be paid at least the same as in schools. That happens in Wales. Why shouldn’t it be true in England?

“Take the market out of education.”

**Sadie Robinson**



Sixth form strikers picketing last year.



# Big protests after Nazi killings in Germany

There was rage on the streets after a Nazi carried out a racist massacre at two shisha bars in the town of Hanau

**TENS OF thousands of anti-fascists took part in vigils and protests across Germany on Thursday evening of last week.**

They came after a far right terrorist killed nine people from migrant backgrounds at two shisha bars in the town of Hanau.

Perpetrator Tobias Rathjen was later found dead at his home along with his mother, who he had also murdered.

Hundreds of people assembled in silence in Hanau to show solidarity with the victims.

Large crowds also gathered in Frankfurt and at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate.

Thousands gathered in Berlin's multicultural district of Neukölln. And protests took place in around 45 other cities.

Rathjen published a document online before the massacre. It called for the "complete extermination" of many "races or cultures in our midst" and peddled antisemitic theories.

He asked whether the "total destruction" of entire states in a future war might be legitimate.

Rathjen listed over 25 countries whose populations he wanted wiped out, including half of Asia, various peoples in North Africa, and Israel.

The German socialist magazine Marx21 has published an article on the background to the killings.

The rest of this article is an extract from it.

## Revelations

In the past few months, hardly a week has passed without new revelations about right wing terrorist networks.

Just last Friday police arrested 12 members of a suspected right wing terrorist cell, including a police officer.

Large-scale attacks on mosques were apparently planned.

Right wing terrorists have killed at least 229 people in Germany since the 1970s.

They also carried out

## BACK STORY

**A German far right terrorist murdered nine people from migrant backgrounds in the town of Hanau, Hesse, last week**

● The perpetrator, Tobias Rathjen, published a manifesto online before the attacks

● It called for the "complete extermination" of "many races or cultures"

● The German far right has grown because mainstream politicians and the media have pushed racism and legitimised it

123 explosive attacks, 2,173 arson attacks, 12 kidnappings and 174 armed robberies.

With the rise of the AfD party, for the first time since 1945 a fascist force, at least in part, was able to establish itself as a firm fixture in German politics.

The Labour-type SPD politician and foreign minister Michael Roth rightly describes the AfD as a "political arm of right wing terrorism".

## Force

At the same time, the AfD is not the only force fuelling racism.

Politicians from all established parties and large parts of the media have created racist images.

They focus on Islam and associate the religion with negative keywords, such as terrorism, women's oppression, homophobia or antisemitism.

The right wing scene in Germany can build on the racism of the "centre," radicalise it and pull social discourse ever further to the right.

Encouraged by this, Nazis and racists across the country feel compelled to act on words. We need anti-racist and anti-fascist mass protests and resistance.



**On other pages...**

Their free speech and ours  
>>Pages 14&15



"FASCISM AND Racism kills everyone"—marching in Hanau after the attack

## UNITED STATES

# Establishment isn't feeling the Bern

by GABBY THORPE

**BERNIE SANDERS is the frontrunner to be the Democratic Party's presidential candidate after a landslide victory in Nevada last Saturday.**

He swept the state, winning twice the number of votes of the second placed Joe Biden.

The win follows victories in Iowa and New Hampshire.

Sanders looks more likely than ever to take on Donald Trump in the US presidential elections in November.

The Democratic Party establishment is running out of

ways to stop him. Sanders is a self-proclaimed socialist—and he is hugely outperforming big business favourites Biden and Pete Buttigieg.

Polls show that Sanders and Biden are neck and neck for the South Carolina primary on Saturday. And on 3 March—"Super Tuesday"—he is expected to sweep California and Texas.

Both are key states in winning the nomination.

A Sanders victory will be a sign of the radicalisation among the working class in the US.

But it won't indicate a transformation of the corporate nature of the Democratic Party.



Frontrunner Bernie Sanders

## CANADA

# More First Nation protests in the pipeline

THE Canadian government and Coastal Gaslink bosses have doubled down pressure on the Wet'suwet'en First Nation Group.

The fossil fuel firm wants access to Wet'suwet'en land to construct a huge gas pipe.

Canadian police began mass arrests over two weeks ago at a



Organiser Natalie Knight

protest camp blocking the construction of the pipeline.

In solidarity, activists from the Mohawk First Nation set up rail blockades—one of which is now entering its third week.

The state and bosses are also using court injunctions to try to block protests.

"You cannot injunct

justice," said protest organiser Natalie Knight.

"We will continue holding solidarity actions until the demands of the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs have been met."

The Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs, a key leadership body, is demanding that police vacate their land before they will negotiate with the Canadian state.



## Go beyond the binary

I THINK sport needs to be arranged on grounds other than gender or level of disability.

Some have said that some trans women have an advantage as they have musculature from their original biology.

Why can't sport be arranged like boxing is now—with different levels such as "heavyweight," but within which all can compete.

There is variation within any gender group.

Someone told me that trans women are not like other women as they cannot produce children.

Well neither can I. It's been a long fight to stop women being defined by our reproductive capacity—and I'm not going back!

The concept of "race" is a social invention.

The binary division of people into two genders would seem to be the same unnecessary construct.

**J Richardson**  
Swansea

●YOUR ARTICLE on the Women's Liberation Movement (Socialist Worker, 19 February) took me back to the time when I was active in the women's movement and my union.

Many in my women's group saw men as the "enemy". Unfortunately, in my workplace, it was women who generally crossed the picket line.

When I argued about this in my women's group I was attacked for bringing "class" into everything.

I continued fighting for women's demands in my union.

**Maggie Mariscotti**  
East London



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Just a thought...

## The farce of Boris Johnson

BORIS Johnson's resemblance to Margaret Thatcher puts me in mind of something Karl Marx said about Napoleon's nephew, who managed to gain presidency in France.

Marx said it showed all great figures in history appear twice, "The first time as tragedy, the second as farce."

**Tony Pill**  
Blackpool

## I'm proud of 'woke' youth

I LIKE this article a lot (The left has a lot of problems, being 'too woke' isn't one, Socialist Worker, 19 February).

I'm proud that the younger generation is unabashedly woke in a way we never were at their age.

Maybe it's because they can't help being fully informed about just about everything.

**Cathy Smith**  
On Facebook

## Flack was vulnerable

CELEBRITIES are human just like the rest of us (Systematic hypocrisy and the death of Caroline Flack, SW online).

They are vulnerable in similar ways to the rest of us.

**Jody Lundy**  
On Facebook

## Where's the good news?

DOES YOUR paper ever report good news for the worker?

Every story on the front page of your website is negative!

**John Ward**  
by email

## Privilege is not natural

MODERN Toryism seems much taken with the discredited racist doctrine of eugenics.

Many Tories would prefer to believe that the privileged have achieved their positions through biology as opposed to a rigged social system.

**Sasha Simic**  
East London

●IT WOULD surprise me more if there was a Tory who wasn't a fan of eugenics!

**Paul Vallard**  
On Facebook

# Population Matters replies

WE PUBLISHED an article on 7 January which Population Matters believes mischaracterises its position on a number of issues, and we have agreed to publish the following letter

THE ARTICLE "Don't buy Chris Packham's myth of overpopulation" (Socialist Worker, 07/01/2020) seriously misrepresents Population Matters' position and makes allegations that are wholly unfounded and grossly offensive.

The article claims that Population Matters "singles out Africa" and "shift[s] the blame on[to] poor people" for the environmental consequences of population growth. Untrue.

We consistently state that global environmental problems are primarily caused by rich nations, and explicitly highlight the injustice of blaming poorer countries:

"Vast disparities exist in consumption and impact between the rich world and the Global South, and within countries themselves.

"A more just global system, in which resources are distributed more equitably, is essential. Whatever form that takes, in order to ensure that there is enough to meet everyone's right to a decent standard of living, the richest must consume more sustainably—in other words, consume less."

The false allegation that PM "singles out Africa" relies on the selective use of a map appearing in one of our videos presenting uncontroversial UN data on global fertility rates.

It is followed immediately in the video by a second map showing the huge, much higher per capita carbon footprints of rich nations—something the article chose to ignore.

The article also made the offensive allegation that Population Matters promotes racist ideas. Our unambiguous, stated position is that racism has no place in the population debate: "We deplore and condemn racist interpretations of population. Race has nothing to do with population or family size."

Far from being a "right wing pressure group", Population Matters is a registered charity, working internationally to support diversity, empower choice, promote human rights and achieve global justice—as our website clearly shows.

The article's false, unfounded allegations are not just offensive but, in so grossly misrepresenting the population argument, are harmful to the achievement of global and environmental justice.

**Robin Maynard**  
Director, Population Matters

## Labour councils might cut, but we won't like it

NICK CLARK characterises my perspective at the Richard Burgon for Deputy event in north London as one of docile acceptance of cuts (Socialist Worker, 5 February).

It is true that I did say there could be conditions when we would have no choice but to impose cuts.

Local authorities that refuse to return a balanced budget could see Tory commissioners taking over.

Our usable reserve balance in Haringey is £20 million lower than five

years ago with even greater demand on our services. Everything we do is in this context.

We must resist cuts while improving services, workers' pay and conditions, and increasing capacity.

Austerity must be resisted. But if we've used all available tools and still can't balance the budget we will be left with no choice.

We do not embrace cuts as an opportunity.

**Mike Hakata**  
Councillor for St Ann's Ward,  
Haringey, north London

## Why it's right to oppose the bosses' EU

I GET very tired of the argument that the Leave vote was entirely reactionary or racist (Socialist Worker, 12 February).

Yes there was a large racist element to the vote.

But surely it's the jobs of the left to push the debate around these issues in a radical direction?

The poorest sections of the working class voted overwhelmingly to leave.

Let down by democracy, lied to by politicians on all sides, many saw it as a big "up yours" to the establishment. This is why

### Myths of the 'great' EU

the Socialist Workers Party was absolutely right to back a left wing leave campaign, however small it was.

Unfortunately this view was not shared by leaders of most unions and the

Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn.

The opportunity to transform the debate was utterly squandered.

I had numerous arguments with those on the Labour left who defended the European Union on the basis that it was "good for business".

However, under capitalism, what's good for business is usually not good for workers. Instead of Boris Johnson saying "Fuck Business" it should have been us!

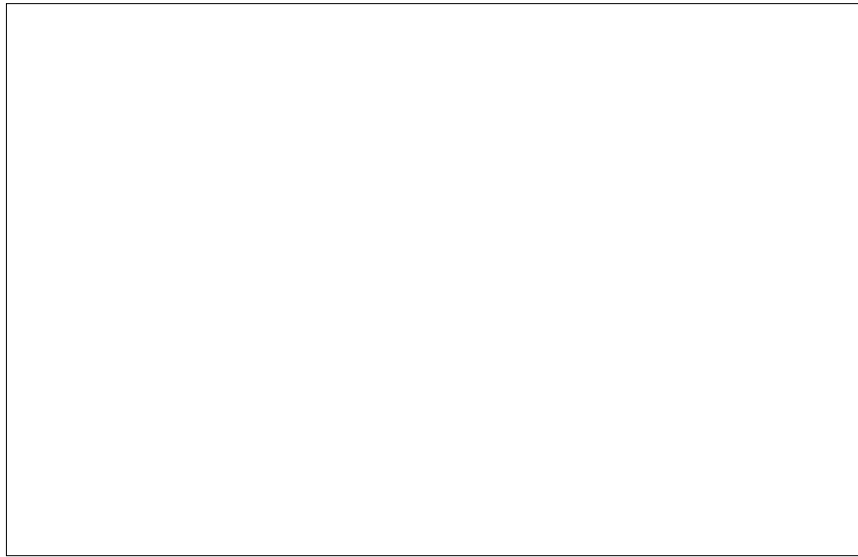
**David Wainwright**  
Leicester



# FLOODING VICTIMS SAY ‘HELP CAME TOO LATE’

Climate catastrophe is here—and it’s causing storms and other forms of extreme weather. **Sophie Squire** spoke to people in South Wales who are battling the flood waters

**I WAS WOKEN** up by my sister at about 8am who told me to look outside—water was at the steps of my house and the water on the road went up to your knees,” Angela Gerard told *Socialist Worker*. She lives in Pontypridd, a town of 35,000 people 12 miles north of Cardiff in South Wales. It has been devastated by record-breaking floods. For some, the experience was utterly terrifying. “There were elderly people trapped in their homes, some of them had dementia and they didn’t know they’d been flooded,” Angela said. One of the most severely hit areas in the country, Pontypridd was besieged by rapidly rising water when the River Taff burst its banks. Over 500 homes were filled with sewage water—which carries the risk of spreading deadly infections. People are furious at a delayed or absent response from local and national governments. Volunteers have been left to organise ad hoc food parcels and accommodation for those affected. The Welsh government has promised £10 million to help councils deal with flood relief—but this paltry amount is too little too late. “The council is saying it is going to release emergency funds to help, but it can’t do that until a meeting this Thursday,” said Angela. “That’s over two weeks too late.” Casper Harris, who works in a health food shop in the town said, “We’ve seen no help—not from the Welsh government, certainly not from the British government.” Flooded residents have been offered a measly £500 from the Rhondda Cynon Taf county borough council—a pitiful amount for those that have lost everything. Days after the flood, the

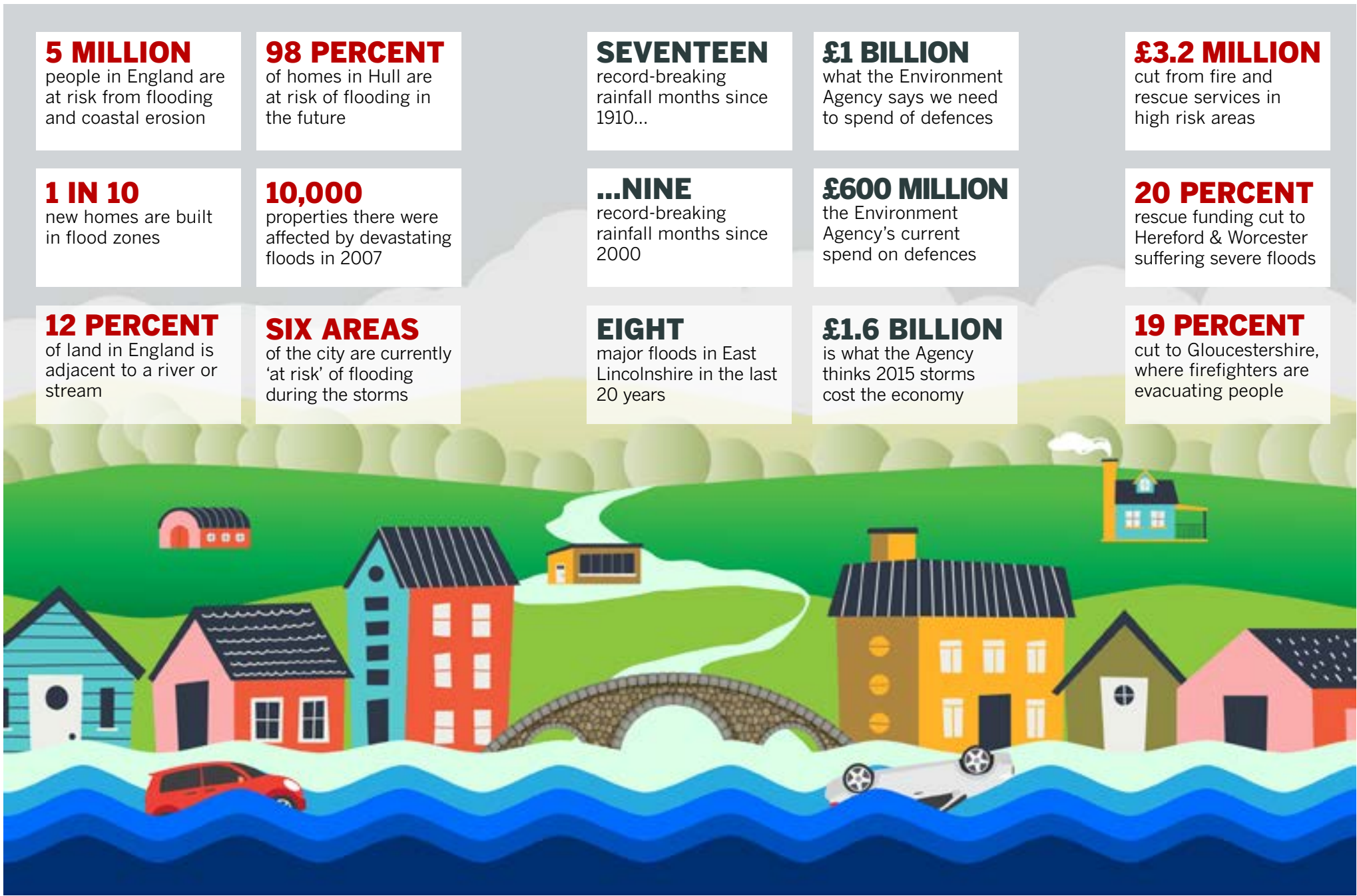


town was still in chaos and residents were only just beginning the arduous and dangerous clean-up effort. Some shops, such as Poundland, are open and trading. In other streets skips were filled with debris, and piles of sandbags remained. Further up the hill large generators powered pumps desperately attempting to shift excess water out of streets still under water. Residents were scrabbling for critical equipment, such as dehumidifiers. But volunteers were reporting that some people can’t even afford the energy required to run them. Residents are crying out a proper flood response system that means people can make emergency plans when needed. Angela said an “amber warning” was in place ahead of the deluge—but such a warning isn’t unusual for Pontypridd. “There was definitely a plan in place for dealing with flooding, yet there needs to be a different one,” she said. “We need one that isn’t just focused on the town centre, but on our homes

too.” The latest storm to rip through the town is just one in a series of disasters to hit Pontypridd. The Rhondda valleys were once of the world’s most important coal mining regions. The area was devastated by the shutting down of the coal industry. One brutal reminder of the dangers of a lack of planning is nearby Aberfan—the site of the 1966 disaster, which claimed the lives of 144 people. Decades of austerity, handed out by both Tory and Labour councils have heaped misery and desperation on people in Pontypridd. And the floods have wrecked some of the services that remain, such as Pontypridd Museum, which had to close in the wake of the disaster. Museum worker Alex said “a lot of our exhibits have been badly damaged.” “This is a loss to our community—we put on events and families come here” In the Rhondda Valley some 35 percent of children live in poverty—one of the highest rates in Wales. The cheapest housing in Pontypridd—like in many other areas of Britain—is built on floodplains. Such homes are more difficult to insure, and a number of those who were flooded had no insurance. And while the national and local governments squabble about who picks up the bill for flood relief



Young residents of Nantgarw evacuated by the fire service last week (left) Angela Gerard (below) and Casper Harris (below, right)



BACK STORY

Climate change means more rain and storms—and flooding

RECORD-breaking extreme weather events are one feature of the climate emergency. A major factor is an unprecedented rise in global temperatures. The United Nations climate scientists’ body warns that temperatures are set to shoot up by 3.5-4.8 degrees by 2080. Rising temperatures are causing sea levels to rise because ice sheets and glaciers are melting. Another key factor is that oceans have absorbed the heat created by greenhouse gas emissions, causing them to expand. This means in urban environments, rivers and waterways are more likely to burst their banks. And coastal towns will suffer when storm surges break coastal barriers.

The horrifying results of climate crisis are already being felt in some of the poorest parts of the globe. Jakarta in Indonesia saw record-breaking floods in January after the city suffered its heaviest rainfall since records began. And at least 28 people died and 59,000 people were affected in Mozambique after heavy rainfall in January. Climate crisis is a global problem with an international solution—urgent and radical action to stop ecological destruction.

Flooding in Jakarta

**Profit drive means more dangers**

INTENSE competition for development driven by profit means more homes are being built on flood plains. Flood plains soak up excess water and help prevent flooding. Building on these plains means those homes are very likely to flood in the event of storms. And because the floodplain is congested, it also makes it more likely that homes elsewhere will suffer too. According to the Committee on Climate Change—which provides advice to the government—Britain is building “faster in the flood plain than anywhere else”. New homes built in areas at risk of flooding have risen dramatically in recent years from 7 percent in 2006-7 to 11 percent in 2016-17. In Doncaster—a region that saw severe flooding at the end of 2019—6,000 new homes are set to be built in high risk areas. There’s a clear reason for this growth—land on floodplains is cheaper. Planning rules were also relaxed by the Tories, so high-risk sites are more likely to get approved. Developers are also allowed to disregard the advice of the Environment Agency. Another factor is the power of the agricultural industry. To protect farmland, bosses are building flood defences—pushing water downstream into working class areas.

**Tories don’t care if your home is washed away**

THE TORY government’s management of extreme weather events in the past decade has exposed their contempt for working class people. In the wake of Storm Dennis the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) blasted Boris Johnson and the Tories for their “shambles” of a response to flooding. And in December Johnson was berated by local people in Fishlake, a village in Yorkshire that suffered horrific flooding. A resident told him, “I don’t know what you’re here today for.” Now key government ministers haven’t even turned up to some of the worst affected areas in the wake of Storm Dennis. They fear the bad press. But it fits into wider disregard for how austerity and climate chaos impacts the poorest in society. The floods have hit many Tory-voting areas, creating a crisis for some MPs. Craig Whittaker is a good example. He’s Tory MP for Calder Valley in West Yorkshire and voted against climate change measures no less than 17 times. Whittaker also voted against extra funding for flood defences after the horrific Boxing Day floods of 2015. Yet when Storm Ciara hit his constituency, Whittaker said he was “furious” that government funding took so long to filter through.

**Worsening**

In 2019, the budget for flooding was £815 million. The Environment Agency advised that £1 billion should be put into flood defences per year to deal with the worsening crisis. This falls far too short. But just funding flood defences isn’t enough. As climate change accelerates it will be necessary to create robust infrastructure that can deal with extreme weather events. And emergency services will need to be better funded. Last week the FBU said that the government made cuts worth £8.7 million to services in areas where flooding poses a “severe risk to life”. The effects of flooding are devastating and long lasting, homes often are made uninhabitable. The financial cost of repairing a home that has been damaged by flooding is on average £30,000 according to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. It should not be left to volunteers to provide emergency services, while the government ignores the victims who are suffering. Extreme weather events are set to get worse—and soon. New infrastructure, such as better flood defence systems, will be needed to protect people from the ravages of climate catastrophe. But it will also mean demanding a radical and urgent reordering of priorities in society—and fighting for one where the needs of people and planet are above the needs for profit.



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

### { SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

#### BLACK COUNTRY

**Booklaunch: A Rebel's Guide to Engels**

Wed 18 Mar, 7.15pm,  
St. Peter's Café,  
4 Exchange St, WV1 1TS

#### CREWE & STOKE-ON-TRENT

**Booklaunch—System Change Not Climate Change**  
Thu 12 Mar, 7.15pm,  
Royal Voluntary Service,  
29 Charles Street,  
ST1 3JP

#### OXFORD

**Unite to save our NHS—how to defend our health services**

Thu 23 Apr, 7pm,  
Oxford Town Hall,  
St Aldate's,  
OX1 1BX

### { SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

#### ABERDEEN

**The Irish elections—a political earthquake**

Mon 2 Mar, 6pm,  
The Snug, Ma Cameron's,  
6-8 Little Belmont St,  
AB10 1JG

#### BARNSELEY

**Revolt in France—how workers can fight back**

Thu 5 Mar, 6.30pm,  
Room 302, The Civic,  
Hanson St, S70 2HZ

#### BIRMINGHAM

**Feeling the Bern—can there be a red in the White House?**

Wed 4 Mar, 7pm,  
The Church at Carrs Lane,  
Carrs Ln,  
B4 7SX

#### DERBY

**A revolutionary guide to Women's Liberation**

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm,  
West End Community Centre,  
Mackworth Rd (next to Britannia Mill),  
DE22 3BL

#### EDINBURGH

**The Irish elections—a political earthquake**

Wed 4 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
7 Victoria St,  
EH1 2JL

#### HUDDERSFIELD

**Get Trump's hands off Palestine**

Wed 4 Mar, 6.30pm,  
Brian Jackson House,  
2 New North Par,  
HD1 5JP

#### KENT: CHATHAM

**Why is Britain so institutionally racist?**

Thu 5 Mar, 7.30pm,  
Nucleus Arts Centre  
(Conference Room),  
272 High St,  
ME4 4BP

# WOMEN, RESISTANCE AND REVOLUTION

#### BIRMINGHAM

Wed 11 Mar, 7pm,  
The Church at Carrs Lane,  
Carrs Ln,  
B4 7SX

#### BRADFORD

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm,  
Bread + Roses,  
14 N Parade,  
BD1 3HT

#### BRISTOL

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm,  
Liberty House,  
11-13 Stokes Croft,  
BS1 3PY

#### BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm,  
Red Triangle Cafe,  
160 St James's St,  
BB11 1NR

#### CHESTERFIELD

Thu 5 Mar, 7pm,  
Chesterfield Library,  
New Beetwell St,  
S40 1QN

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# A takedown of the rich that doesn't quite hit the mark

Greed, a new comedy starring Steve Coogan, shows up the vain and vacuous lives of billionaires. But it suffers from smug liberalism, says **Richard Donnelly**

**DIRECTOR** Michael Winterbottom's new film is a comic take on the lives of the hideously wealthy.

Greed is a mockumentary that follows asset-stripping, tax-avoiding retail boss Sir Richard "Greedy" McCreadie.

Played by Steve Coogan, McCreadie makes billions buying up high street fashion outlets and selling off their property—leaving a trail of bankruptcies.

The main inspiration here is Phillip Green, the billionaire who sucked huge profits out of BHS before leaving the company to go under. Just like Green, McCreadie lives the private yacht lifestyle while his workers make a pittance.

The film follows McCreadie as he prepares for his 60th birthday party.

The multimillion pound toga party is an orgy of bad taste and vanity.

McCreadie orders a replica of the Colosseum, so he can live out his Russell Crowe-inspired fantasies of being a Roman gladiator.

He even has some refugees—who have washed on his Mediterranean beach—dressed up as Roman slaves so they don't spoil the place for his guests.

## Skewering

So on paper, Greed seems like a much-needed skewering of the rich.

But there's a problem—and it's a big problem for a comedy. The film is simply not funny.

It's not the type of satire that makes you feel like ordinary people have got one up on the rich.

Much of the humour revolves around McCreadie's extravagant use of four letter words to bollock his employees.

McCreadie's downtrodden inferiors are just props. They show what a bastard he is. But they almost never get one back on him.

What's more, jokes about an "underclass" who voted for Brexit mean that this critique of the excesses of capitalism smells suspiciously of liberalism.

That suspicion can only heighten with a walk on role by Stephen Fry, who plays himself with his usual private school persona.

Tellingly, he is the only character who manages to make some jokes at McCreadie's expense.

Not even Asim Chaudhry, who plays Chabuddy G in the BBC's hilarious People Just Do Nothing, manages to inject any real laughs into the film.

Unfortunately, Greed is a wasted opportunity to properly lampoon the Monaco set and their vacuous lifestyles.

Greed is in cinemas now



JOSEPH MARCELL, Clive Mendus and Jessica Walker in *Alone in Berlin*

## Story of defiance against Nazi regime

### PLAY

#### ALONE IN BERLIN

Showing at Royal & Derngate, Northampton until 29 February. Then at Theatre Royal, York, 3–21 March, and The Playhouse, Oxford, 24–28 March

**SET IN 1940, the play is a gripping portrait of life in wartime Berlin. Based on the**

novel by Hans Fallada, *Alone in Berlin* follows a quietly courageous couple, Otto and Anna Quangel.

In dealing with their own heartbreak, they stand up to the brutal reality of the Nazi regime.

With the smallest of acts, they defy Hitler's rule with extraordinary bravery, facing the gravest of consequences.

When they decide to make

a stand in their own unique way, the Gestapo secret police launch a terrifying hunt for the perpetrators.

Otto and Anna find themselves players in a deadly game of cat and mouse with the forces of the state.

It's a game that will eventually lead them down through ever-narrowing circles of fascist hell.

## The Miners' Strike as told by those who were there

### FILM

#### MINERS' STRIKE STORIES

Premiere, Friday 6 March, 7pm at National Union of Mineworkers, 2 Huddersfield Road, Barnsley, S70 2LST

**THE LAUNCH of this film coincides with the anniversary of the end of the 1984–85 Miners' Strike.**

The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign wanted to record the real stories from participants of the great strike.

It's a way of preserving on film the heroic struggles of miners, families, support groups such as Women Against Pit Closures and other supporters from across mining communities.

These accounts tell the story of times past.

But they also provide inspiration to future generations of why they should become involved in the trade union movement today.

The premiere will be held in the iconic Miners Hall, which holds dozens of miners' banners.

Supporting the strikers

### PLAY

#### WITHIN SIGHT

Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh  
Thu 5–Fri 6 March, 8pm  
Tickets from £5

OUR PROTAGONIST is "an inspiration", "so brave"—and tired of hearing it.

As a disabled athlete, she takes pride in her athletic prowess.

But after receiving news she did not make the Paralympics team, she starts untangling the ways in which she's internalised the extreme expectations society puts on disabled people.

Ellen Renton's new spoken word theatre show is a one-woman performance based on her personal experience of living with albinism, and confronts everyday ableism.

### PLAY

#### CORIOLANUS

Crucible Theatre, Sheffield  
Fri 6–Sat 28 March  
Tickets from £15

THIS IS a contemporary take on William Shakespeare's play about the disconnect between the rulers and the ruled. Celebrated soldier



Tom Bateman as *Coriolanus*

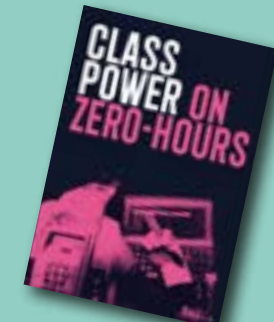
Coriolanus is propelled to power, only to lose the trust of the people.

Torn down from his pedestal, banished at the height of his fury, he unites with an old enemy to bring down the city he fought for.

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**YOU can't say anything these days. Rod Liddle, who once assaulted his pregnant partner, points out in his columns in The Sun, The Mail, Sunday Times and the Spectator that you can't get hate into newspapers.**

Jeremy Clarkson was censored by the BBC for assaulting his producer for being Irish and late with his drink. He only has The Sun, The Times, Sunday Times and Amazon Prime to make racist jokes in.

Even the actor Laurence Fox was so restricted in expressing his posho prejudices that he only got to do it on Question Time and This Morning.

The right has always been in the business of twisting ideals they despise into a parody.

It's partially why billionaires say they are anti-establishment and wars are fought for freedom.

So it was inevitable that the bigots' head prefect Toby Young would set up a union. Having lost a job policing what Muslims can say in colleges two years ago, Young launched a union last week.

Young's free speech union—yes seriously—burst out of a boil of an ongoing campaign by the right.

If you have been picked on by the nasty leftists then get in touch and—for a fee—he and his reactionary support group will take up your case.

The argument runs that free speech means the right to say whatever you want, whenever you want, to whoever you want, without consequences. So to be offensive is not offensive, it is expressing free speech.

Anyone who objects is objecting to free speech, which means they're the fascists.

### Dangerous

One consequence of this dangerous bilge is that if you tell racist bigots that standing up for racism and bigotry makes them brave free speech defenders, they're going to act on it.

But there is another free speech tradition.

In the early 20th century in the US, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) waged a free speech campaign. Speakers would stand on the street and speak out against local corrupt bosses.

This was met with brutal crackdowns by the authorities. Over 5,000 speakers were arrested at one time.

The scale of workers' response and the determination to speak out meant the IWW created and organised space for themselves and others.

Later, college protests for civil rights and against the Vietnam War were ignited by the 1964-65 Berkeley Free



PROTESTERS TAKE on the far right For Britain party

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

# THEIR FREE SPEECH AND OURS

As debates rage on the left over whose opinions should we allow to be heard, the right pose as free speech defenders to justify bigotry. Simon Basketter speaks his mind



Right wing Toby Young

Speech Movement. It began as a movement to acknowledge students' right to be political, which had been subjected to a ban. Again activists faced crackdowns and mass arrests.

At one point, 800 students who had been occupying an administration building were arrested. Some 3,000 activists blockaded a police car taking one student to jail.

They made speeches on top of the car and prevented it from moving for 32 hours, until the



**Does that mean we should no platform all that we disagree with?**

charges were dropped. The right to be politically active on campus was won.

Berkeley became a focal point for college activism during the mass opposition to the Vietnam War.

So whose voice gets heard is a battleground but not the way the right pretends it is.

In truth there is little freedom of speech under capitalism. Laws such as copyright and libel law limit what can be said and published. Capitalism

prioritises the rich—so those with the most money get to shout the loudest.

Within corporate media there is a near uniformity of views on politics in general and foreign policy in particular.

The right attempts to confuse and disorient people otherwise opposed to its ideas.

It normalises hate speech while at the same time ironically portraying the left as "intolerant."

So people who normally demand law and order with added flogging celebrated when a judge condemned cops for arresting someone for being abusive to trans people.

**SOCIALISTS are against thought crime cop raids. But we should take no lectures from those who have no interest in women's rights any more than they do in trans rights.**

They are just interested in strengthening the right to hate.

There is in fact quite a lot less shutting down of the poisonous words of the right than there needs to be.

So does that mean we should no platform all we disagree with?

No. The slogan "no platform" grew as a way of recognising the specific nature of fascism and as a mechanism for mobilising against it. Fascism is not a political current like any other and should not be treated as such.

Fascists are dedicated to destroying every vestige of democracy. Mere words are not enough to defeat them.

Through the 1970s there were successes.

Mass mobilisations created a climate where it became difficult to be a respectable Nazi and very difficult to find a platform for their views.

From the 1980s onwards, particularly in student politics, there was a tendency to generalise the idea of no platform.

Any means necessary to stop the Nazis was replaced with easier bureaucratic methods to stop all oppression.

The good bit was that, as movements made links with the interconnecting oppressions in capitalism, more things got confronted.

### Moralism

The bad bit was a fair chunk of moralism that came from looking for any agency other than mass action to bring change.

One of the reasons for this expansion was a move away from action of any sort to tackle oppression.

No platform could be used as a quicker way of dealing with problems than either argument or protest.

That can seem useful if the left run the institutions, less so if they don't.

It also rules out trying to tackle reactionary ideas that aren't fascist. The state in

particular has a long history of using restrictions on rights against the very people who are meant to be protected.

So socialists fight for the widest possible expansion of democracy.

Most of the most important struggles in the history of revolt were partly or wholly begun by winning democratic rights and making them real and meaningful.

The right for the voiceless to speak and be heard has been at the heart of that.

**THE historic battle for free speech is to guarantee the right to speak without intervention from the state or the boss. It doesn't guarantee the right to speak unopposed or uncontested from below.**

There is a difference between telling truth to power and the powerful making sure theirs is the only voice.

Everyone accepts limits to free speech. For example the mainstream press wouldn't publish child pornography in the name of free speech. Though they come close.

We should accept no limits on our rights to protest against the powerful.

The right to strike can be in conflict with the right to work. This can be resolved by argument or votes and ballots. It can, though less often than it should, be resolved by stopping scabs with picket lines.

### Won

People have won the right not to be harassed, abused, and attacked by bigots. People who don't understand that should be discussed with. People who don't agree with that should be argued with.

People who think it is good for the poor and the oppressed to be attacked should be protested against and shouted at. They can even be shouted down.

People who want to turn the skin of Jewish people into lampshades should not be given any sort of a platform or promotion. Their movements should be ruthlessly smashed.

**THE IWW speak out against bosses (top) Students at Berkeley block a police car (above) Bigots used 'free speech' to defend the Nazi Tommy Robinson (left)**



### READ MORE

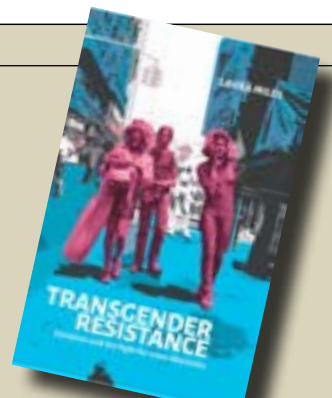
● **Freedom of speech for all?**

Socialist Worker article by Sadie Robinson. Online at [bit.ly/free-speech-all](http://bit.ly/free-speech-all)

● **Fascism: What it is and How to Fight it** by Leon Trotsky £6

● **Transgender Resistance** by Laura Miles £10

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## The blame game and the death of TV's Caroline Flack

Sarah Bates says reaction to the suicide of TV presenter Caroline Flack leads us away from understanding the mental health crises

CAROLINE FLACK'S death this month has opened a discussion about reality TV, the media and its impact on mental distress.

Amid the tabloid fixation a ferocious blame game is taking place.

Flack was arrested in December after allegedly assaulting her partner.

At the time The Sun newspaper responded by plastering picture of her bloodied bedroom across two pages.

Tabloids targeted her clothing, physical appearance, mental health, romantic relationships and celebrity friendships.

It shows how women in particular can be pulled apart by a media desperate to get more clicks on their articles to boost advertising revenue.

A petition demanding it be a "criminal offence" for the media to "knowingly and relentlessly bully a person" "up to the point that they take their own life" has now reached over 800,000 signatures.

It called for the media to be charged with an offence similar to corporate manslaughter, in the event of similar suicides.

### Cruelty

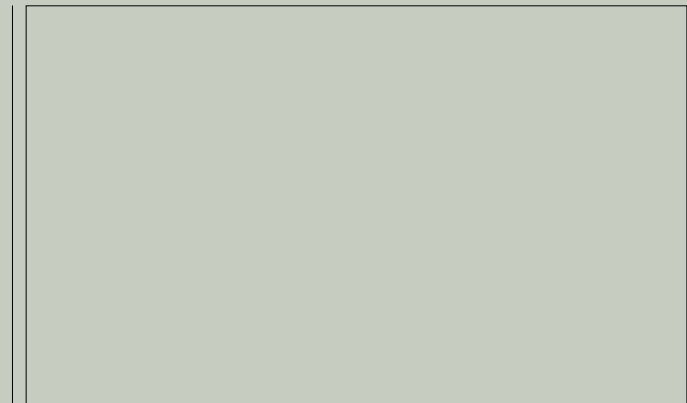
It's right to be angry at the pointless cruelty of the mainstream media.

But simply blaming the media reduces the complex, long-term factors that affect mental health into a single-issue campaign.

However repugnant the press, socialists should treat attempts to clamp down on media freedom with caution.

Tightening legislation further will give more power to the state and the judiciary. Neither operate in the interests of ordinary people.

Another explanation for Flack's death came from the



CAROLINE Flack

boss of her management company. He blasted the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for pressing ahead with her case, despite Flack's "very vulnerable" state.

"The CPS should look at how they pursued a show trial that was not only without merit but not in the public interest," he said.

Only those involved in Flack's legal proceedings will understand the specifics of her case.

Yet some are using it to question whether police and the CPS should pursue prosecutions if there is no official complaint.

It is far from the case that the CPS pursue prosecution in all cases. For instance, survivors of child sexual exploitation have been routinely ignored by police and social services.

Similarly victims of domestic violence, who are overwhelmingly women, may feel too scared or ashamed to attempt the lengthy and arduous prosecution process.

While some people blame the tabloid media's obsession with Flack for her death, journalists are quick to point the blame at Love Island—the



**Media blaming reduces mental health into a single-issue campaign**

TV ratings hit Flack hosted until her assault charges.

Love Island is a deeply exploitative TV programme that relies on young working class people to expose the most intimate parts of themselves.

### Contestants

Flack is the third person associated with the programme to have taken her own life.

Former contestant Sophie Gradon killed herself in 2018 and Mike Thalassitis died by suicide the following year.

But a straight line cannot be drawn between the suicides of Flack and the two former contestants.

Reducing people's mental health to an appearance on a TV show can distract us from the anguish that millions of people are facing.

A Samaritans charity report said that some 6,507 people died by suicide in 2018.

It said poorer people were at a higher risk.

"We found that income and unmanageable debt, unemployment, poor housing conditions and other socioeconomic factors all contribute to high suicide rates," it said. And cuts make it harder for people to access services.

The coroner's inquiry into Caroline Flack's death has been adjourned until August.

But the media, Twitter trolls and TV producers are likely to continue tearing strips out of each other.

What can easily be forgotten is that at the heart of these toxic industries are vulnerable individuals who are mercilessly chewed up and spat back out.



# Julian Assange fights extradition challenge

by CHARLIE KIMBER

**JULIAN ASSANGE began his fight against extradition to the US in a London court on Monday.**

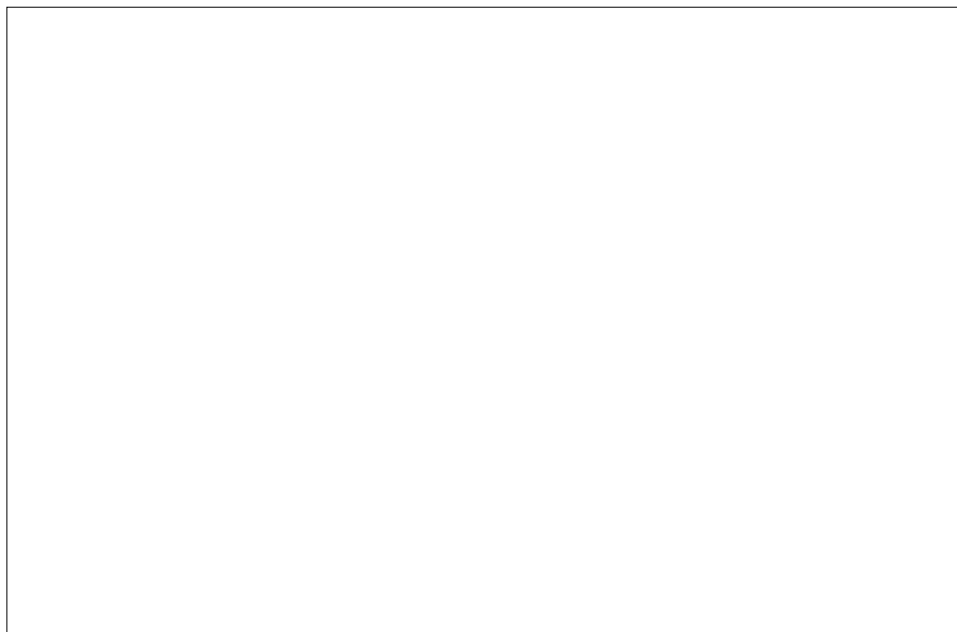
After a week of arguments from prosecution and defence, the extradition case is scheduled to be adjourned until May.

Assange is the founder of the organisation WikiLeaks. In 2010 it released about 470,000 classified military documents concerning US diplomacy and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It later released a further tranche of more than 250,000 classified US diplomatic cables.

Wikileaks obtained and decrypted video footage from a US Apache helicopter in 2007.

It showed Reuters journalist Namir Noor-Eldeen, driver Saeed Chmagh and several others as the Apache shoots and kills them in a public square in Baghdad, Iraq.

After the initial shooting, an unarmed group of adults and children in a minivan arrives on the scene and tries to transport the wounded.



**JULIAN ASSANGE is facing up to 175 years in prison**

They are fired upon as well.

Many of the damning documents revealed by Wikileaks were obtained by former US soldier Chelsea Manning. She spent seven years in jail and has been jailed again for refusing to name those who helped her.

Assange now faces one

count of computer hacking as well as 17 allegations of violating the 1917 Espionage Act. They carry a maximum sentence of 175 years in prison.

It is the first time that the 1917 act has been used to indict a publisher or journalist. The prosecution of

Assange is both the revenge of the US military machine and a direct threat to anyone who might reveal the truth about the crimes of the US military.

Labour MP Richard Burgon said recently "Wikileaks helped expose war atrocities. All who support a

free press must oppose this extradition."

At one time there was a competing extradition request for Assange from Sweden, where two women had made allegations of sexual assault and rape.

But the Swedish authorities have dropped the investigation.

## Prosecution

Eva-Marie Persson, Sweden's deputy director of public prosecution, said last November that she found the alleged rape victim's version of events to be "credible and reliable".

However, she added that the evidence had become weaker due to the passage of time since the alleged rape took place.

It was right that Assange was investigated by the Swedish authorities.

But he should not be extradited to the US. To do so would punish someone for exposing imperial slaughter.

If the courts approve extradition, the British government will have the final say. It must be pressured to say no.

## Sajid Javid's links with US donations

**SAJID JAVID, then the home secretary, signed the Donald Trump administration's extradition request for Assange in June 2019. The year before, Javid visited Georgia in the US for the "world forum" of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI).**

Javid spoke at the meeting, as did Jonah Goldberg, a fellow at the AEI.

Goldberg has called for Assange to be "garroted".

Since attending his first "world forum" at the AEI in 2011, within a year of becoming an MP, Javid subsequently visited six out of eight AEI annual conferences up to 2018.

In total, Javid has received £31,285.19 in gifts from the AEI.

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# Israel's political deadlock exposed by another election

As Israelis prepare for their third election in a year, Nick Clark looks at what lies behind the stalemate—and says the occupation of Palestine lies at the root of the deep political crisis

**ISRAEL CLAIMS** to be the only democracy in the Middle East. Maybe that's why it's heading for its third election in 11 months.

Or maybe it's because that “democracy”—built on racism, war and imperialism—is in profound political crisis.

Twice in the past year Israelis have been to the polls—and twice, neither main party has been able to form a government.

The latest election is set to take place on Monday of next week. This time round, Israeli pundits worry that the biggest problem is that voters have stopped caring.

Binyamin Netanyahu—Israel's current and longest-serving prime minister—faces trial over corruption charges that could send him to jail (see column).

So the tone of each election has at times been bitter. But on the occupation of Palestine—the defining issue of Israeli politics, both major parties are almost identical.

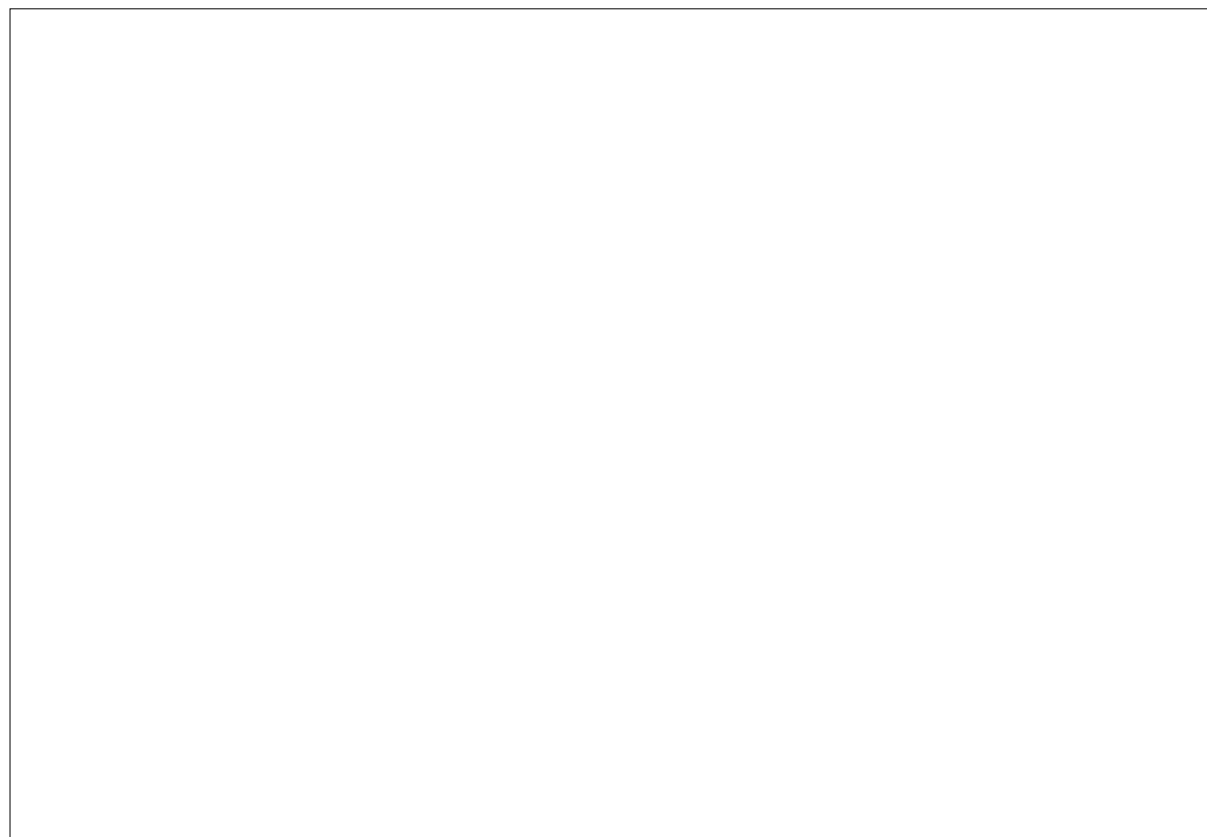
## Sharing

Neither Netanyahu's Likud party or his rival Benny Gantz's Blue and White party are prepared to give up the occupation.

That rules out allowing Palestinians to have any kind of state worthy of the name, or sharing one state with Palestinians either.

There was a time when parties paid lip-service to the idea of a two-state solution—particularly the Labor Party—dominated Israeli politics. In reality their promise of a two-state solution was used to deepen the occupation—particularly through building more settlements on Palestinian land.

Now a two-state solution would mean removing the hundreds of



**NETANYAHU HAS** built support thanks to his racist and warmongering policies

thousands of Israelis living in settlements, tearing up an intrinsic part of Israeli society.

So Netanyahu has dominated as prime minister for more than ten years thanks to his racism, warmongering against Palestinians and his support for settlements.

There's very little space in Israeli society for any mainstream party to differ from that.

So Likud and the Blue and White

fight each other while basically agreeing on the most fundamental issue in Israeli politics.

Instead Gantz's challenges Netanyahu over the corruption charges, and looks to the support of the “centre left” to form a coalition.

Netanyahu responds by labelling Gantz a “leftist” in league with Arabs, and relies on the support of Israel's religious and far right parties to do the same.

Neither of them have been able to get a majority—and all the polls suggest they're headed for another hung parliament on Monday.

It looks like their only way out is to form a “national unity” government together. But Netanyahu's corruption scandal, and Gantz's refusal to govern with him have stood in the way.

That won't be resolved soon, and Israel's crisis will rumble on for as long as Palestinians are denied justice.

## Favours, kickbacks and bribes

**JUST TWO** weeks after the election, Binyamin Netanyahu is set to appear in court to face a number of corruption charges.

He's accused of accepting lavish gifts and bribes from billionaire friends as well as offering political favours to media bosses in return for positive news coverage.

Three allegations against Netanyahu have made it to court.

The first, known as Case 1,000, accuses him of accepting expensive cigars, champagne and jewellery worth hundreds of thousands of pounds from film producer Arnon Milchan.

In return, Netanyahu is said to have helped Milchan arrange a visa to the US and get tax breaks in Israel.

In the second—case 2,000—Netanyahu is accused of backing legislation that would close one of Israel's major newspapers Israel Hayom.

Hayom is more sympathetic to the right.

## Rival

But Netanyahu supposedly agreed to shut Hayom down if the editor of Hayom's rival Yedioth Ahronoth agreed to give him favourable coverage.

The final case that made it to court—Case 4,000—accuses Netanyahu of helping media boss Shaul Elovitch with business dealings.

In return, Elovitch's news website Walla! would give Netanyahu favourable coverage.

## Trump deal hasn't delivered success for Netanyahu

**BINYAMIN** Netanyahu had hoped that Donald Trump's Middle East “peace” plan would help him win the election.

The long-awaited plan—finally released at the end of January—proposes handing every West Bank settlement and the entire Jordan Valley to Israel.

For Netanyahu, it was perfect. He appeared alongside Trump at the plan's unveiling, hoping to present it as a success for their close relationship.

Trump's support is something Netanyahu relies on heavily, especially

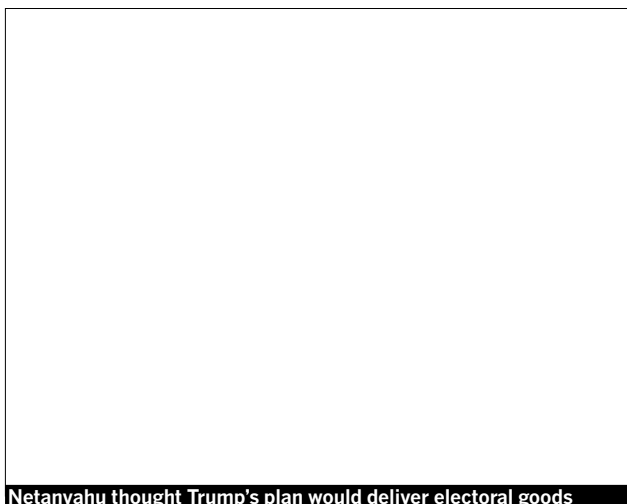
among the right wing settler parties that prop him up in coalition.

The deal bolsters his image as an international leader who stands up for Israel's “security”—uniting it with rulers of Arab countries against their shared enemy Iran.

But there are some stumbling blocks.

For a start, Netanyahu's rival Benny Gantz also backs Trump's plan and was also invited to the White House to discuss the deal with Trump.

What's more, far from satisfying Netanyahu's



**Netanyahu thought** Trump's plan would deliver electoral goods

right wing backers in Israel, it has actually angered them.

He promised settlement leaders the plan would allow Israel to annexe all West Bank settlements “immediately”—before the election. So he was embarrassed when Trump's officials told him he has to wait until it's over.

Even immediate annexation wouldn't be enough to satisfy them.

Settler leaders rejected Trump's plan—because they won't accept any Palestinian state at all.



## IN BRIEF

**Addaction workers get ready for strike**

HEALTH WORKERS in Wigan and Leigh were set to launch five days of strikes over pay on Thursday.

Unison union members at the Addaction charity plan to walkout on Thursday and Friday this week.

This is set to be followed by more strikes on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week.

Workers were outsourced from the NHS to the charity, which runs the alcohol and drug rehabilitation service on a contract to Wigan council.

Bosses at Addaction have refused to honour their promise to pay workers the NHS rate of pay.

**Harrods pay action off for secret deal**

THE UNITE union suspended a planned walkout by security guards and CCTV operators at Harrods last week.

Workers had been set to strike against poverty pay on Saturday until bosses came back with a new offer.

Unite is recommending that workers vote to accept the new pay offer—the details of which are “confidential”.

**A belly flop for lifeguard action**

THE UNITE union suspended a planned walkout by lifeguards in Blackburn and Darwen as a “goodwill gesture” ahead of talks.

Some 14 lifeguards were set to strike for four days from Friday of last week.

A job reevaluation by the council will see lifeguards employed on a lower grade and see their pay plunge by up to £3,000 a year.

Unite should call further strikes.

**Strike vote lets the cat out of the bag**

WORKERS AT the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) have voted for strikes.

The Unite union members voted by 73 percent to strike over management's imposition of new “performance pay” contracts.

**New train strike dates announced**

WORKERS ON the South Western Railway network are preparing for a fresh round of strikes.

The RMT union members are fighting to defend their jobs from the rollout of driver only operation services.

They are planning to walk out for 24 hours from 10am on 9 March and for a further 24 hours on 12 March.

Bosses should guarantee the role of the guard on future services and axe these attacks. Workers struck for 27 days in December. Their union, and other rail unions, should call further action soon.

## HEATHROW



**BAGGAGE HANDLERS** at Heathrow airport completed their second four-day strike on Tuesday of this week. The Unite union members are fighting for a better pay offer than the bosses' measly increase of just 32 pence an hour.

PICTURE: UNITE LONDON AND EASTERN/TWITTER

## POST

# Workers get vote out for Royal Mail battle

POSTAL WORKERS across Britain staged a fresh show of strength on Tuesday as they gear up to vote in a new national strike ballot.

Members of the CWU union held gate meetings at Royal Mail workplaces to say they are all voting yes to strikes in the ballot set to begin on Tuesday of next week.

It comes as their bosses push through a wave of attacks designed to smash up Royal Mail, drive down their conditions and slash thousands of jobs.

Speaking to a meeting at the North London Delivery Centre on Tuesday, CWU area delivery rep Kevin Carey said, “What’s actually happening in offices is no longer a threat—no longer a proposal—it’s actually happening.”

He told Socialist Worker, “The changes will have a



**Building the ballot**

massive effect on earnings and a massive effect on jobs. We’re talking thousands upon thousands of job losses if the changes are implemented.”

Royal Mail bosses want to turn some of the firm into a parcels company run for profit. What’s left of the letters company will be run down, and workers’ jobs timed to the second. Workers have already voted to strike—but action

was called off after bosses got a court injunction to rule the vote unlawful.

Now bosses are driving changes through.

These include scrapping some sorting machines, changing shift patterns, setting up later deliveries, and introducing electronic clocking in and out.

Some workers at the meeting in north London asked what would happen if bosses take the union to court again. Royal Mail can’t be allowed to use the law to stop action again—workers have to be prepared to defy the courts if necessary.

But for now, union members are working on delivering another thumping strike vote.

“If anything, the intensity of Royal Mail’s changes has got members even more up for taking action,” said Carey.

## Celebrate resistance with Socialist Worker this May Day

May Day is a chance to celebrate working class solidarity against the bosses and resistance to oppression.

Every year Socialist Worker produces a special supplement of May Day greetings from our readers in trade unions, colleges and campaigns. Make sure to get yours in by **10 April**

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## UNISON UNION



**Workers are determined to get more pay**

PICTURE: DESPINA KARAYIANI

## ‘We will strike until we win,’ say traffic wardens

TRAFFIC WARDENS in Hackney, east London, have vowed to keep up the fight over pay and terms and conditions.

Around 50 Unite union members rounded off a two-week strike on Friday of last week.

The workers, who are currently on the London Living Wage of £10.75 an hour, are demanding £15 an hour and better terms and conditions.

Outsourcing giant Apcoa manages parking services on a contract to Labour-run Hackney council.

Onay Kasab, Unite regional organiser, said, “The message

to Apcoa on the last day of the strike is very clear. We want £15 an hour, we want improved sick pay and better annual leave.

“The message to Hackney council is, stick to your election manifesto and take the service back in house.

“The message to Apcoa and Hackney is, unless you give us what we want we will take action. Next time we will be out for a month—we will strike until we win.”

Trade unionists should build solidarity for the traffic wardens’ fight and get ready to join them on the picket lines again.

## OBITUARIES

**John Tregale**  
1946-2020

JOHN TREGALE, our West London Socialist Workers Party (SWP) comrade died on 16 February. He was in hospital undergoing treatment for complications following recent heart surgery.

John was absolutely committed to the party and its politics.

For years before his illness he never missed a Saturday sale or a branch meeting.

Sales with John were a real pleasure and the banter often hilarious.

But he combined the levity with a deadly seriousness about the politics and about the importance of being out there on the street.



**John Tregale**

He had the rare ability to convince people, to listen to them, never to lecture them, and to be friendly all the time he was demolishing their arguments.

People seemed to enjoy the experience of arguing politics with John. He was very well

informed and widely read. At branch meetings when the speaker didn’t turn up, John would just quietly step forward and give the introduction himself, with no notes but combining knowledge with great enthusiasm.

Because he wanted everyone he talked with to understand and be excited by our politics, his contributions were always informative and engaging.

John was a one-off, a giant, irreplaceable, irreplaceable and he’ll be very sadly missed, both by the comrades who worked with him and by his many friends.

We send sincere condolences to them and most particularly to his family.  
**West London SWP**

## STAND UP TO RACISM

## Anti-racism in Scotland

AROUND 100 people joined the Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) Scotland conference in Glasgow last Saturday.

Workshops discussed the hostile environment and the new immigration bill, institutional racism, the rise of the far right and a host of other topics.

The conference showed how vital it is to unite. People discussed how racism divides and turns people against each other—which weakens the working class a whole.

Delegates spoke about how battling racism plays a crucial role in challenges the wider injustices in society.

Some speakers put out

a demand that anti-racist campaigns should link up with those involved in other struggles, such as independence activists or Extinction Rebellion.

They argued that fighting racism, climate change or austerity requires a mass collective response.

There was a strong trade union presence at the conference, including from the Unison, Unite, PCS, RMT and UCU unions.

Weyman Bennett, SUTR co-convenor, urged people to join the national demonstration against racism on 21 March in Glasgow.

**Brian Claffey**



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# Strike for rewards in Tower Hamlets

by SARAH BATES

**TOWER HAMLETS council workers in east London have backed strikes against a series of attacks on their pay, terms and conditions.**

Unison union members who work at the council voted by 90 percent for strikes, while members at the borough's schools backed walkouts by 98 percent.

Unison branch secretary John McLoughlin told Socialist Worker, "This is an overwhelming rejection of management's attempts to impose contracts and its threats to use the law against us."

"To get a turnout of over 50 percent in both ballots is a significant achievement."

## Shut

Unison rep Tom told Socialist Worker it was "a brilliant result and shows the determination of workers to stop this council forcing us onto new contracts".

"This Labour council is doing the Tories' dirty work," he said. "We should fight until the council withdraws its proposals."

NEU union members in schools have already returned a 95 percent vote for strikes. The GMB and Unite unions,



UNISON UNION members in Tower Hamlets strike in 2014

PICTURE: PAUL MCGARR

which also represent workers at Tower Hamlets council, are balloting their members for action.

The Labour-run council wants to force workers to accept worse terms and conditions under its "Tower Rewards" scheme.

Council bosses said they are going to sack and

re-engage workers on worse contracts in April—and threatened legal moves to stop the NEU and Unison ballots.

Strikes could see thousands of workers from four unions walk out together.

"The council needs to reconsider and step back from threats or we will be

looking at sustained action," said John.

Tom added, "It's really important that every worker fights attacks on our terms and conditions."

"With Boris Johnson in government there are going to be further cuts. Public sector workers will need to fight against austerity."

## CATERING



Brogan's Cafe workers demand dignity at work

## An all-out strike to go at Brogan's Cafe in Swindon

WORKERS AT Brogan's Cafe in Swindon were in a defiant mood as they began the second week of an indefinite strike over poor working conditions on Monday.

They are demanding the living wage of £9.30 an hour, an end to zero hours contracts, safe working equipment and union recognition.

Brogan's Cafe fired workers after they walked out on Monday of last week, saying that it will "teach them a lesson".

## Shut

James, one of the strikers, told Socialist Worker that they had successfully closed the cafe.

"The cafe has been shut since last week and the management have just vanished," he said.

"We haven't heard anything, but if they reopen we will go back to picketing."

Workers' anger has been building up for a long period of time.

"Many of us are members

of the Bfawu union, but bosses won't recognise the union," said James.

"When they wouldn't give us proper contracts or safe facilities that was the last straw."

"We told them that if they didn't change things we would be walking out."

"And they still ignored us—so we didn't have any other choice."

He added, "We may have been fired, but it's better than working somewhere where we're not respected."

"And we're not going to give up because of threats."

Trade unionists in Swindon have backed the workers.

Jon Timbrell from Swindon trades council said, "The workers here are asking for some completely reasonable stuff like proper contracts and decent pay."

"It is really important that workers come out in solidarity."

● Donate to the strike fund at [bit.ly/BrogansStrikeFund](http://bit.ly/BrogansStrikeFund)

## TRANSPORT

## Dial-a-Strike for higher pay and dignity at work

HUNDREDS OF workers at Transport for London (TfL) planned to strike together for higher pay on Friday.

Around 300 workers on Dial-a-Ride buses and 300 other TfL workers are fighting against a 1 percent pay offer.

They include revenue protection officers, road enforcement officers, compliance officers and others.

The Unite union members struck at the end of last month. This time Woolwich Ferry workers will join the day of industrial action in the first of three planned walkouts over pay, terms and conditions.

Unite members plan a further two walkouts in

March and April. Unite regional officer, Simon McCartney said, "TfL staff in the control centre are the eyes and ears of the capital."

"They are having their holidays slashed by TfL bosses for no good reason."

"These workers play a crucial role ensuring London's roads run smoothly and without them parts of London could become gridlocked."

"Meanwhile TfL has bulldozed through a derisory 1 percent pay increase for TfL workers."

Trade unionists should join the picket lines outside TfL's Palestra House in Southwark and the Dial-a-Ride depots across the capital.

## LONDON UNDERGROUND

## No service across the Bakerloo Tube line

THE BAKERLOO line of the London Underground ground to a halt last weekend as workers staged a solid four-day walkout from Friday of last week.

The RMT union members are fighting for "passenger and staff safety in the face of timetable changes bulldozed through by London Underground bosses".

Workers were joined at the Elephant and Castle depot by striking UCU university union members and students from the London College of Communication.

Mick Cash, RMT general



On strike at Elephant and Castle

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

secretary, called on Tube bosses and Labour mayor of London Sadiq Khan to "wake up and take seriously the impact on staff of their timetable changes". "You

cannot place intolerable stress and pressure on Tube drivers that impacts on their safety-critical role," he said.

"That is what this dispute is all about."

## OUTSOURCING

## St George's workers storm event

SECURITY GUARDS at St George's medical school in south London protested at a postgraduate open night on Friday of last week.

It was part of the UVW union members' long-running dispute to be brought back in-house from subcontractor Noonan. They have struck for nine days since the beginning of the year—and are expected to announce further dates.

The UVW has filed court proceedings against bosses.

It says the decision to outsource the largely migrant workforce on "inferior pay and terms and conditions of employment than university employees amounts to indirect race discrimination".



# 'INSIDE I WORK FOR £1 AN HOUR'

By TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

**THE TORIES** have handed Serco a multimillion pound contract to run a further two immigration detention centres.

The Home Office gave Serco a £200 million grant to run Brooke House and Tinsey House near London Gatwick Airport. The outsourcing giant has been plagued by allegations of abuse—including sexual harassment—towards people held at Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre.

Tory immigration minister Kevin Foster said the Serco contract would "significantly improve the day-to-day lives of detainees and the staff who support them".

Detainee Kumar knows the brutality of the detention and deportation business.

"There's a very poor quality of life inside, but the people at the top don't listen to our complaints," he told Socialist Worker.

He has been detained at Harmondsworth and Colnbrook immigration detention centres, near



A PROTEST against charter flight deportations at the start of February

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

London Heathrow Airport, for eight months.

The complex has been run by leading profiteer Mitie on an £180 million eight-year contract since 2014. Kumar explained that detainees have to work for as little as

£1 an hour to get by. "You're not allowed to work outside because of the Home Office's rules, but inside you can only get £1 an hour," he said.

"It includes cleaning, serving and painting over any graffiti and maintaining the

detention centre. Sometimes you could be working for six hours."

The High Court ruled in March 2018 that it was legal to pay people £1 an hour inside detention centres.

The judge said the rate of

pay was acceptable because the aim of the work is "to provide meaningful activity and alleviate boredom".

Kumar said that detainees felt forced into work because of poor living conditions inside detention centres. "If

you have family on the outside, they can support you with money," he said.

"But even if you do have family, they don't always have money. You get toothpaste, brush and soap, but it's the cheapest and poorest quality so we have to buy our own".

## Disgusting

"Everything is so expensive in here," Christopher, another detainee at Harmondsworth, told Socialist Worker, "This is disgusting and I said I'm not doing it."

"I've been through all that as a child."

After Christopher's father died when he was seven, he was forced to work for free and physically abused.

He was one of those who was almost deported on the charter flight to Jamaica at the beginning of the month.

Christopher remains locked up in brutal conditions—with the threat of deportation hanging over his head. Anti-racists must campaign to stop deportations and shut down immigration detention centres.

## Fight to bring back those deported and detained

ANTI-RACISTS are fighting to bring back people who were deported to Jamaica—and to stop the threat of further charter flights.

Margaret, whose partner Christopher is locked up in Harmondsworth detention centre, has been spreading the message across south London.

Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) has organised to get her into workplaces and union branches, and organised petitioning on the streets.

Christopher's deportation was blocked by a last minute court order on 10 February.

But he could still be removed at any time.

Margaret fears for his wellbeing while he remains inside Harmondsworth detention centre.

"When I called him last Saturday, I could tell that he was really

down," she told Socialist Worker. "He said that he would hurt himself."

"When I finally got through, the person went to look and said his arms were all burnt."

"I was told his mental

health problems weren't recorded in the book."

"The Home Office has statements from the GP about Christopher's mental health, but they're telling me they didn't know."

She added, "The most important thing is to get him out and make sure he can't do any more harm to himself."

The SUTR Tower Hamlets group has been petitioning on the streets of east London alongside Jana.

Her disabled partner Rayan Crawford was deported to Jamaica at the beginning of the month.

Support Rayan and Christopher at [bit.ly/BringRayanHome](https://bit.ly/BringRayanHome) and [bit.ly/DonatetoChristopher](https://bit.ly/DonatetoChristopher)

Harmondsworth detention centre

## Tory points plan revealed

HOME SECRETARY Priti Patel and the Tories have unveiled a plan for a "points-based" immigration system.

Migrants would have to score 70 points to be able to work in Britain.

They would need to have the offer of a 'skilled job' and the ability to speak English, to gain 50 points.

Having qualifications would also gain points.

This creates a false distinction between "high" and "low skilled migrants".

Those deemed to be "low skilled" could be brought in on temporary visas, but would have few

Priti Patel

rights once in Britain.

The rules, which would come into force next year, are set to be outlined in an Immigration Bill in March.

Anti-racists should fight to defeat the bill, and defend and extend free movement.